

WellBeing International

## WBI Studies Repository

2012

### The HSUS Investigates: Chicagoland Pet Stores

The Humane Society of the United States

Follow this and additional works at: [https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/hsus\\_pmc\\_iae](https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/hsus_pmc_iae)



Part of the [Animal Studies Commons](#), [Other Business Commons](#), and the [Sales and Merchandising Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

The Humane Society of the United States, "The HSUS Investigates: Chicagoland Pet Stores" (2012).  
*PUPPY MILL INFORMATION*. 6.

[https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/hsus\\_pmc\\_iae/6](https://www.wellbeingintludiesrepository.org/hsus_pmc_iae/6)

This material is brought to you for free and open access by WellBeing International. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of the WBI Studies Repository. For more information, please contact [wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org](mailto:wbisr-info@wellbeingintl.org).



# The HSUS Investigates: Chicagoland Pet Stores

---

Where do pet stores in the Chicago area get the puppies they sell and what do the stores tell their customers about their sources? As the public becomes more aware of the breeding factories known as puppy mills, and the often substandard and inhumane conditions for the adult breeding dogs caged at these massive breeding operations, pet stores that still sell puppies are concerned about a public that is too well-informed and, as the holidays approach, are relying on impulse buying and consumer gullibility. A similar HSUS investigation in New York City just prior to the 2011 holiday shopping season revealed a pattern of deception on the part of shopkeepers anxious to keep buyers from discovering that their puppies were from puppy mills.



HSUS investigators photographed row after row of cages at this Kansas puppy mill which sent shipments of dogs to Pocket Puppies in Chicago. – 2012/HSUS

This year's investigation demonstrates that the trend continues. Over three days (October 29-31, 2012), an HSUS investigator and a local Chicago resident visited 12 Chicagoland pet stores to find out where the cute little puppies in the windows were bred. The results of the investigation reveal a pattern similar to what we discovered in the New York City investigation. Again and again, salespeople denied that their puppies came from puppy mills, and most did not comply with a law passed in 2010 by the State requiring pet shops to "post in a *conspicuous place in writing on or near the cage* of any dog or cat available for sale the information required by subsection (a) of this section."<sup>1</sup> The information required includes the price, age, health and immunization history, and the *name and address of the animal's breeder*. (Our emphasis.)

HSUS researchers also reviewed hundreds of Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) documents obtained through the Illinois open records law, which show the origin of puppies shipped to Chicago-area pet stores. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection reports for the puppy breeders were then

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/SB/09700SB1840.htm>

examined for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and Illinois Department of Agriculture files on the pet stores themselves, which include complaints from the public and state inspection reports, were also reviewed.

Chicagoland is rife with puppy sellers. HSUS researchers found 67, including brick-and-mortar pet shops, pet groomers who sell puppies, on-line businesses and a home and garden store that sells puppies.

## General Findings

- 8 out of 12 stores visited appeared to violate the State's pet shop disclosure law; the other 4 stores had information in binders but did not "post [the information] in a conspicuous place on or near the cage of any dog or cat available for sale."
- More than 2,000 puppies were shipped to Chicago-area pet stores during an approximate 6-month period
- More than 1,000 of the puppies shipped to Chicago-area pet stores came from Iowa - most through huge puppy "brokers," which are dealers that re-sell commercially-raised puppies and make it nearly impossible to know who the puppy's breeder was.
- 979 puppies were shipped to Chicago-area pet stores from Indiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Ohio
- One of the pet stores visited is also breeding puppies, with about 50-60 breeding dogs kept in the back of the storefront in small, stacked wire cages. Puppy Parlor has been the subject of 19 complaints to the Illinois State Department of Agriculture over the past two years, and was quarantined for a week last year due to an outbreak of Parvovirus that killed at least 6 puppies.

## Pet Stores Visited – Specific Findings

1. **Collar and Leash Boutique** – 1345 N. Wells St., Chicago [www.collar-and-leash.com](http://www.collar-and-leash.com)  
Breeder information on puppies for sale was written on the back of cage cards but customers would need to know to ask for the information, violating the law's demand for conspicuous placement of the information. Two consumer complaints have been filed during the past 2 years with the Illinois Department of Agriculture – one about dogs and cats in poor condition with no food or water; another about a puppy with an injured leg who had not been treated by a vet (Oct 2011). State inspectors visited and said they found conditions acceptable, even though the inspector reported that the store manager, "Bob" originally told the inspector that the puppy with the injured leg had been seen by a vet and then later changed his story when the inspector said he would be calling the vet to verify. The inspector just warned Bob that in the future, injured animals needed to go to a vet. Certificates of veterinary inspection show that the store buys puppies from J.A.K. Puppies, Inc., a huge puppy broker in Iowa, but information obtained from the backs of the price cards during HSUS's visit to the store showed dogs originating from [Wanda Kretzman / Clearwater Kennel](#) in Cushing, MN. (video) – a breeder with serious violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act on her USDA inspection reports for many years. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection show that Iowa puppy broker J.A.K. Puppies, Inc.,

buys many puppies from Kretzman. The most recent USDA inspection report for Kretzman showed 902 dogs and puppies at her facility and noncompliant items included dogs with swollen, inflamed or bloody feet in need of veterinary care, beetles crawling in dogs' food and puppies shipped who had not been seen by a veterinarian within a 10-day time period before shipping.<sup>2</sup> In numerous other reports dated between January 13, 2010, and November 14, 2011, USDA inspectors noted puppies overcrowded in shipping cages,<sup>3</sup> dogs with dental disease, hair loss, eye problems, soiled and matted coats and a nursing mother dog whose "hip bones and spine were readily apparent indicating suboptimal body condition," temperatures of 90 degrees F at 11:00 a.m., mold on the food in self-feeders, an accumulation of feces with mold on it under the cages of 278 dogs, and strong ammonia buildup affecting 827 dogs prompting the inspector to write "...and the undersigned inspector could feel the ammonia burn the eyes and nose as well as began coughing after being in these areas for a period of time."<sup>4</sup> Kretzman also shipped puppies under 8 weeks of age, had expired vaccines<sup>5</sup>, and was cited for not having an adequate number of employees on staff to handle the 1,391 dogs and puppies at her facility in January 2011, prompting the inspector to note, "Given the degree of noncompliance present at this facility, this number of employees appears to be insufficient." The USDA also found dozens of dogs with overgrown nails and an accumulation of frozen feces in the cages of 505 dogs, noting, "The flooring of some of these enclosures were almost entirely covered with feces leaving little to no clean area for the dogs to walk or otherwise utilize the space."<sup>6</sup> The USDA had to inspect Kretzman's facility 5 times in 2011 alone and, among other problems, found a Pug and a Bichon in need of veterinary care for eye and skin problems.<sup>7</sup>

Another breeder supplying this store – **Gary Simmons** in Amity, MO. – has serious violations of the Act on his USDA inspection reports, including a Boston Terrier and a Wheaton Terrier in need of veterinary care for painful conditions.<sup>8</sup> Simmons had 60 breeding adults and 49 puppies according to a June 18, 2012, count by a USDA inspector. Yet another puppy mill supplying this store – **Clayton Yoder** of Kalona, IA. (stills) – had 138 breeding dogs according to his March 5, 2012, USDA inspection report. Earlier reports for Yoder reflect dogs with matted hair and filthy enclosures.<sup>9</sup> **Ray and Malinda Yutzky** of Princeton, MO – also supplying puppies to the store – were cited for violations of the Animal Welfare Act on their most recent inspection report and had 112 breeding dogs and 78 puppies at their mill at the time.<sup>10</sup>

No response was received from the store in reply to an email asking about its policy of buying puppies from puppy mills.

---

<sup>2</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated October 12, 2012

<sup>3</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated January 13, 2010

<sup>4</sup> USDA Inspection Reports dated March 4, 2010 and August 10, 2010

<sup>5</sup> USDA inspection Report dated September 14, 2010

<sup>6</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated January 12, 2011

<sup>7</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated July 26, 2011

<sup>8</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated May 16, 2012

<sup>9</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated May 24, 2010

<sup>10</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated May 25, 2012



2. **Puppy Parlor (aka Poochie Puppy Parlor)** – 4707 Main St., Lisle [www.puppyparlor4707.webs.com](http://www.puppyparlor4707.webs.com)

The store did not comply with the pet shop disclosure law – information for the two puppies inquired about was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator more than once. When pressed for the information, the owner finally produced disclosure forms, one of which was lacking breeder information.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has received 19 complaints about **Puppy Parlor** over the past 2 years – 5 from buyers and others from concerned shoppers and possibly from employees of the store as

allegations of dead puppies in the freezer were made to the Illinois State inspectors.



IL state inspectors took this photo of adult breeding dogs stacked in cages four high in the back room of Puppy Parlor (aka Poochie Puppy Parlor) in Lisle in October 2011. The photos were taken during an outbreak of Parvovirus which killed at least 6 puppies. Dozens of breeding dogs live their entire lives in these cages, unseen by the public.  
– 2011/IL Dept of Agriculture

In October 2011, according to records of inspection and investigation from the Illinois Department of Agriculture, 105 dogs (60 adults and 45 puppies) at Puppy Parlor were placed under quarantine due to an outbreak of canine Parvovirus – a deadly disease often associated with unhealthy living conditions. At least six puppies died from the deadly virus but the store owner continued to sell puppies until the mandated quarantine. The State’s files also reflect numerous complaints from people who bought sick puppies suffering from giardia, roundworms, malnourishment, ear infections, and respiratory infections. Although the state inspectors have repeatedly rated conditions as “acceptable,” the State’s own documentation reflects complaints from the public about sick puppies purchased, malodorous and unsanitary conditions in the store, no heat or hot water in the store; puppies with no food or water; overcrowding, and puppies dying. Photos taken by state inspectors show numerous dogs in stacked wire cages. Some of the dogs are in cages that are only about the same length as their bodies. In a photo (taken by a state inspector) of what appears to be the back room area where dozens

of breeding dogs are confined, cages are stacked three to four high and the dogs have barely enough room to turn around.

The HSUS investigator observed puppies at Puppy Parlor of various ages displayed in overcrowded cages. On its website the store states: “We breed, and rehome pets, rescue, and have a relationship with breeders that we have been associating with for over 25 years.” Certificates of Veterinary Inspection reveal that Puppy Parlor buys from **Conrad Kennel** in Keota, Iowa which has been cited for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act by the USDA, including dogs with matted coats and filth.<sup>11</sup> Conrad Kennels had 226 breeding dogs and 27 puppies on site according to its October 22, 2012, USDA inspection report. The store also buys from Oleo Acres Kennel and J.A.K.’s Puppies, Inc., in Iowa – two large brokerage operations that collect puppies from mills and re-sell them. J.A.K. buys many puppies from Wanda Kretzman/Clearwater Kennels in Minnesota, who has egregious violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act reflected on her USDA inspection reports (see Collar and Leash for more information on Kretzman’s violations).

In response to an email inquiry asking if the store buys its puppies from puppy mills, the store wrote: “No our puppies are happy and healthy come check us out.” The HSUS has received multiple complaints from consumers about disturbing conditions witnessed and sick puppies purchased at Puppy Parlor.

3. **Pocket Puppies** – 2479 N. Clark, Chicago [www.pocketpuppies.com](http://www.pocketpuppies.com)

The store did not comply with the pet store disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator. In 2012, The HSUS received a complaint about Pocket Puppies alleging that a puppy was sick and underage when purchased (in 2007). The Illinois Department of Agriculture has received complaints on Pocket Puppies regarding noncompliance with the disclosure law, unknowledgeable staff and puppies with suspected worm infestation. The second complainant referenced a number of online puppy buyer complaints. On its website under FAQs the store says: “We work with a select group small licensed breeders across the United States. Specific breeder information is given to the customer at the time of orientation. Our breeders have a consistent record of providing healthy and smaller than average puppies. We screen out any breeders that don't meet Pocket Puppies standards.” In fact, Pocket Puppies buys from puppy mills in Missouri and Kansas, some of which have serious violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act documented on their USDA inspection reports. Among these mega-breeders are **Hazel Coleman** in Lebanon, MO., with 98 breeding dogs and 45 puppies, and USDA violations including matted dogs and filth,<sup>12</sup> and **Tim Deters** in Baileyville, KS., with 175 breeding adults and 57 puppies whose USDA violations include dogs in need of veterinary care, failure to keep proper records and filth.<sup>13</sup> Pocket Puppies also buys puppies from **Debra Cannon** in Miami, OK, who was captured on videotape taken by an HSUS investigator in September 2009, spraying dogs in wire cages with a strong stream of water to get them to “shut up.” Cannon cages more than 100 breeding dogs at

<sup>11</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated July 13, 2011

<sup>12</sup> USDA Inspection Reports dated Jan 24, 2011, October 17, 2011 and March 29, 2012

<sup>13</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated September 10, 2012 and March 28, 2012

her puppy mill and has USDA violations on her most recent inspection report.<sup>14</sup> Pocket Puppies uses the misleading term, “adoption,” when referring to its puppy sales and displays puppies behind glass on red velvet floor pads.

The store did not respond to an email inquiry asking for its policy on buying puppies from puppy mills.

4. **Happiness is Pets** – 1542 Ogden, Downers Grove [www.happinessispets.com](http://www.happinessispets.com)

Although the store did not post breeder information in a conspicuous place “on or near the cage[s]” the information was available in a centrally-located binder. There have been at least 6 public complaints filed with the Illinois Department of Agriculture over the past 2 years, including those about sick puppies who tested positive for distemper, a puppy dying of pneumonia and a shopper who complained that the puppies looked sick and had green mucus surrounding their noses and mouths. Another complainant said that the puppies did not have food or water and that the cages were full of feces. State inspectors repeatedly visited and said they found conditions acceptable.

5. **Happiness is Pets** – 15 W. Golf Rd., Arlington Heights

Although the store did not post breeder information in a conspicuous place “on or near the cage[s]” the information was available in a centrally located binder. The Illinois Department of Agriculture received one complaint regarding a puppy who appeared to be thin and was shivering and other puppies who appeared lethargic. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection indicate that other Chicagoland stores in the Happiness is Pets chain bought puppies from numerous puppy mills across the Midwest, including **Jerry Simmons** of Shelbina, MO., who was required to use a licensed veterinarian to crop the ears of his puppies after the USDA discovered that Simmons was doing it himself,<sup>15</sup> **Neal Feldkamp** of Lewistown, MO. (stills), who, according to the USDA inspector, had allowed toenails on Boston Terriers to grow out to the point where they were “beginning to turn outward instead of downward,” and who had a litter of Shih Tzu puppies in one enclosure which “had coats that were soiled with a brown grimy organic materials. A build up on fecal material is a disease hazard to both the adult dogs and the young litters of puppies.”<sup>16</sup> **Les Knust** of Lacona, IA. (stills), whose USDA license was cancelled in March 2010, owns the property in Lacona, IA, but a new USDA license was issued to a Kristi Rath at that same address in April 2010 and shows 75 dogs on the most recent USDA inspection report, which also reflects deficiencies in the dogs’ cages that could cause disease or injury.<sup>17</sup> **Victor Schwartz** of S. Whitley, IN (stills) also supplies puppies to the store but no USDA license could be located for Schwartz. Pet shop disclosure forms in both the Downers Grove and Arlington Heights locations indicated that dogs also came from **Nick Menne** of Lime Springs, IA (stills), a USDA licensed breeder who had 317 adult dogs and 84 puppies on his most recent USDA inspection report.<sup>18</sup> Mennes has been cited for violations of the Animal Welfare Act including mats and excessively long toenails on

<sup>14</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated February 2, 2012

<sup>15</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated August 30, 2011

<sup>16</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated September 29, 2012

<sup>17</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated Jan 20, 2012

<sup>18</sup> USDA Inspection Report date August 8, 2012

dogs, fecal accumulation in enclosures, insufficient space for dogs and filth inside the shed housing dogs – including a pile of waste from the enclosures.<sup>19</sup>

6. **Furry Babies** – 152 Stratford Square Mall, Bloomingdale [www.furrybabiesinc.com](http://www.furrybabiesinc.com)

The store did not comply with the breeder disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator. In April 2012 the store was fined \$500 by the Illinois Department of Agriculture for noncompliance with the disclosure law. In the past 2 years, the State has received 3 complaints about Furry Babies noncompliance with the disclosure law. In 2010, The HSUS received 2 complaints alleging that puppies from the Bloomingdale Furry Babies chain store were sick upon purchase. Both puppies referenced in the complaints died. Furry Babies' website states: "We specialize in pure bred puppies and designer breeds from breeders that are hand-picked and USDA certified." The USDA does not certify breeders – it licenses them, meaning that the breeder must meet only minimal standards for housing and care. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection show that the Furry Babies chain has purchased puppies from puppy mills in Missouri and Kansas, some of which have serious violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act cited on their USDA inspection reports. Among these breeders are **Kathy and William Clarke** in Yates Center, KS, whose most recent USDA inspection report reflected dogs with severe tick infestation on their ears and faces, a dog who had lost 15% of her hair and 2 Boston Terriers in need of veterinary care. The report also cited the Clarkes for failing to provide clean, potable water to some of the dogs.<sup>20</sup> The Clarke's November 16, 2011, USDA inspection report reflected 11 violations of the minimal standards of the Animal Welfare Act. (All puppies from breeders mentioned here were sent to the Peru, IL, Furry Babies store.)

In response to an email inquiry regarding the store's policy about purchasing puppies from puppy mills, the store wrote: "Our babies come from good USDA licensed breeders or private breeders. They are all hand picked by the president of our company and are examined twice by the vet to make sure that they are all healthy for their new family. [...] Our babies are not puppy mill babies and are very well taken care of."

7. **Furry Babies** – 2352 Fox Valley Center, Aurora [www.furrybabiesinc.com](http://www.furrybabiesinc.com)

The store did not comply with the breeder disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator. Puppies at Furry Babies are displayed in cribs and are perfumed. See breeder info above.

8. **Alsip Home and Nursery** – 20601 S. LaGrange Rd., Frankfort [www.alsipnursery.com/pets](http://www.alsipnursery.com/pets)

Although the store did not post breeder information in a conspicuous place "on or near the cage[s]" the information was available in a centrally located binder. There were 2 dogs being treated for upper respiratory infections at the time of the store visit. One of the dogs – a very young Corgi puppy – was one of many dogs the store bought from **Heritage Puppies** in Iowa, a huge puppy breeder-broker. Alsip

<sup>19</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated November 16, 2010

<sup>20</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated August 22, 2012



staff told the HSUS investigator that they only buy puppies from breeders with small numbers of dogs, yet, on a recent USDA inspection report for Heritage Puppies, the federal inspector noted 458 adult breeding dogs and 220 puppies on the property.<sup>21</sup> State inspection reports reveal a 2011 complaint about a puppy purchased who was infected with giardia and a 2012 complaint about noncompliance with the disclosure law. The State inspector was satisfied that the information in the binder “next to the puppy play area” was acceptable to satisfy disclosure requirements even though the information was not posted in a conspicuous place on or near the cages as required by law. Alsip’s website states: “Alsip Home & Nursery is very careful to only buy puppies from sources that are licensed by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) or from local 'hobby' breeders that can be easily visited. The USDA conducts regular inspections of these licensed establishments to ensure that the facilities are clean, healthy and not overcrowded, and that adequate health care is provided.” Unfortunately, USDA inspection reports often cite puppy mills for being overcrowded, filthy and lacking veterinary care but it does not mean that such inspections result in corrections and compliance. It is quite common for years of noncompliance to be tolerated by the USDA before it takes action against a puppy mill.

Alsip did not respond to an email inquiry regarding its policy on purchasing puppies from puppy mills.

9. **Hug-A-Pup** – 4950 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago [www.letspetpuppies.net](http://www.letspetpuppies.net)

The store did not comply with the pet shop disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, documents had to be requested by the HSUS investigator which the owner at first did not seem able to find. When the investigator arrived at the store, the owner was photographing puppies in their cages with artificial flowers for website advertisements. State inspection reports show one complaint received over the past 2 years claiming unsanitary and malodorous conditions. State inspectors visited and said they found conditions acceptable. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection show that the store obtains puppies from what appear to be unlicensed breeders in Indiana, as they could not be found in the USDA breeder database – among them, **Earl Beechy, Harley Yoder, Lonnie Yoder, Martin Miller** (video), **Merlin Bontrager** (still photos), **Steve Petersheim**, and **Vernon Beechy**, all of Topeka, IN., **J. Yoder** of Shipshewana, IN., **Lyle Borkholder** of Nappanee, IN., **Mary Miller** of Kokomo, IN., and **Susan Nawalski** of Winamac, IN.

In response to an inquiry asking for the store’s policy about buying puppies from puppy mills, the store’s representative wrote: “Yorkie puppies, Sire & Dam were both OUR dogs. Shih Tzu puppies. Breeder, family raised in there [sic] home.” No mention was made of the origin of numerous other breeds available for sale on the store’s website.

10. **Top Dog’s Puppy Store** – 6919 W. Grand Ave., Chicago [www.chicagotopdogs.net](http://www.chicagotopdogs.net)

The store did not comply with the pet shop disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator. The store owner then only produced puppy shot records, and refused to name the breeders and, when pressed, the owner said that he was the breeder, then changed his answer and told the HSUS investigator that the puppies

---

<sup>21</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated August 9, 2012

came from Indiana. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection from the Illinois Department of Agriculture show that Top Dog buys some of its puppies from **Joseph Miller** – a USDA-licensed breeder in Indiana with 78 dogs and 45 puppies reflected on his September 4, 2012 inspection report.

In an email response to an inquiry about the origin of their puppies, Top Dog’s representative wrote: “No we do not purchase our pups from puppy mills. Many small breeds are bred by us and our breeders also we work with few small licensed breeders.”

11. **Puppies R Us** – 3404 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago [www.puppiesrus.org](http://www.puppiesrus.org)

Although the store did not post breeder information in a conspicuous place “on or near the cage[s]” the information was available in a centrally located binder. State inspection records reveal a complaint filed in 2011 regarding noncompliance with the disclosure law but the inspector considered the store in compliance. A review of health certificates shows that the store obtains puppies from Indiana puppy mills, including many that have serious violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act on their USDA inspection reports. These puppy mill operators include **Devon Troyer** (Pine Creek Enterprises, Inc.) in Middlebury, IN., whose USDA inspection reports sadly reflect dogs in need of veterinary care which the inspector described as “a cavalier with eye discharge in both eyes, a sore between the toes of the rear left foot and a severe ear discharge with thickened skin making evaluation of the ear canal difficult; ... a Shih Tzu ... found favoring the rear right leg. Upon exam, long nails were found one of which was split and broken into the quick at the base of the nail. This is a painful condition causing the dogs to limp. A shih tzu ... is severely matted and needs to be clipped. The heavy mats cause discomfort and may obscure skin irritation issues; a dog ... was found with the right eye extremely bulged; A bulldog ... was found with diarrhea.”<sup>22</sup> **Larry Miller** (Railside Canines) in Millersburg, IN., also supplies the store. He had 40 adult dogs and 44 puppies on his most recent USDA report. Violations on Miller’s inspection reports include feces accumulation and bulldog puppies with “severe eye deformities” who had not received veterinary care.<sup>23</sup> **Marlin Bontrager** in Rome City, IN, had 121 adult dogs and 177 puppies at his mill during the June 21, 2012, USDA inspection. Bontrager’s USDA violations include a sick, weak puppy who had not been provided veterinary care and overheated dogs panting in temperatures exceeding 90 degrees.<sup>24</sup> Puppies R Us also buys from what appear to be unlicensed dealers in Indiana.

In a response to an emailed inquiry about the store’s policy on purchasing puppies from puppy mills the store wrote: “all the puppies are from private [sic] breeders. We give u all the info where the puppy came from.”

12. **Pet Luv Center** – 8057 S. Cicero Ave., Chicago <http://petluppetcenter.com>

The store did not comply with the pet shop disclosure law – information was not posted in a conspicuous place but, rather, had to be requested by the HSUS investigator. Its website states: “Pet Luv Pet Center works only with reputable, licensed puppy breeders. This guarantees that your puppy will be healthy and happy. We are happy to give you all of the details about where each puppy comes

---

<sup>22</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated October 5, 2010

<sup>23</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated January 11, 2012

<sup>24</sup> USDA Inspection Report dated June 19, 2012

from and answer any questions you may have.” In fact, a review of Certificates of Veterinary Inspection reveal that its puppies come from huge Iowa puppy brokers. One of the brokers Pet Luv uses is Iowa puppy broker J.A.K. Puppies, Inc., which buys many puppies from Wanda Kretzman / Clearwater Kennel in Minnesota. Recent USDA inspection reports for Kretzman documented 902 dogs and puppies at her facility. Noncompliant issues listed on federal inspection reports at Clearwater Kennel included dogs with swollen, inflamed or bloody feet in need of veterinary care, beetles crawling in dogs’ food, piles of feces, and a dirty and understaffed facility. The HSUS investigator noted many older puppies in the store – some as old as 5 months. State inspection reports reveal that in March 2012 the Bureau of Animal Welfare received a complaint from a person who had purchased a sick puppy from Pet Luv. The complainant claimed that all of the puppies in the store were sick, covered in feces, and had no water. An inspector contacted the buyer and learned that the sick puppy had been returned for a refund.

The store did not respond to an email inquiry asking for its policy on buying puppies from puppy mills.

## Conclusion

This investigation shows once again that pet stores are not usually truthful about the true sources of their puppies. People who purchase a puppy from a pet store are almost always inadvertently supporting the cruel puppy mill industry. The Humane Society of the United States urges people who wish to add a puppy to their family to consider adoption from a local animal shelter first. If deciding to purchase from a breeder, purchase only from a breeder you have met in person after seeing how and where the breeding dogs are living. For more information on how to get a puppy, visit [www.humanesociety.org/puppy](http://www.humanesociety.org/puppy).